



FOR THE LOVE OF PORT™
COLLECTIVE PORT WISDOM

2016 Vintage Port Forecast



Article and photos by Roy Hersh © July 2018

The 2016 Vintage Port declaration represents only the 2nd generally declared year of the decade and comes a full five years after the extraordinary 2011's. It has also been a half century since a classic vintage declaration took place with a year ending in "6" – as in 1966. Historically speaking, it should be noted, it is only the second time since 1896 that a majority of Port houses will release their Vintage Port from a harvest ending with the digit "6".

The Event

As I was leaving for Portugal the next day, there was still a lot to get done, but I took a chance and flew down to the Bay area for a great tasting. Hosted by Symington Family Estates, (Dom, Charles and Rupert), Quinta do Noval and Quinta da Romaneira, (Christian Seely and Carlos Agrellos), The Fladgate Partnership, (David Guimaraens and Nick Heath). It is not every day that they come to the United States, no less all of them together. And when they do, it is almost a guarantee they will make it to San Francisco, where their importer is located.

This special event, was billed as: "The 2016 Vintage Port Declaration Release Tour" and since I could be back home the same evening, all I had to do was make sure I did not miss my flight and pray it would not be cancelled on the way home. How do you pass up the opportunity to try at least a dozen gorgeous 2016 Vintage Ports that had not been released yet? In fact, I was leaving to spend more than a month and a half in Portugal, returning in early July, after organizing my own blind tasting of these same 2016 Vintage Ports and several dozen others. The Fairmont Hotel in SF was the venue and it is a great place. I've been to several other events there over the years and their banquet rooms are spacious and worked perfectly for this event.

My flight precluded me from doing the walk around tasting beforehand and there were some large format and older Vintage Ports I would have liked to taste. I was able to taste a couple, but was nearly immediately whisked into the room for the main event. It was informative and well organized. The table provided enough space as you can see from the photo. However, the amount of time for the tasting was a bit rushed.

I am not sure we even had five minutes with each Port. But after doing 56 of the 2011's in three hours, this was going to be a breeze. That said, it is not how I like to do tastings and it is why I rarely post tasting notes on events like this. To make things even more challenging, I am admittedly like a turtle when critically analyzing wines that I will put in the newsletter or write up for magazines. IF I am not writing notes and can speak extemporaneously to an audience, or the person next to me, that's an entirely different scenario. But I realized this was going to be a challenge and took the very best notes possible, realizing it was just a quick taste so that local buyers on and off premise, could make some buying decisions for their establishments.

My tasting notes provided *snap shot* views of these exemplary Vintage Ports. There was not a lot of time for tasting the left overs that were being poured in the bar area outside of our room afterwards. There was only one that I knew I had to get to and it was already gone, so I had to wait for Portugal to try the *Graham's Stone Terraces*, and at a much calmer pace.

The Dichotomy

It cannot be ignored that 2015 was a very fine year for Vintage Port, arguably excellent, and far easier to deal with in the vineyards than 2016 or 2018, as examples. With 76 bottlings of 2015 Vintage approved by the IVDP, (91 in 2011) one doesn't have to ponder long, whether or not 2015 was a great and deserving vintage. Truth be told, loads of small and medium-sized Port producers were less than happy that four of the five largest Port companies wound up deciding not to declare. That was understandable, as that decision wound up having an immediate and direct financial impact on those who believed that 2015 was worthy of a *classic declaration*. It is undeniable that 2015 is a monumental vintage for Port, certainly not on a par with the likes of 2011, imho, but I felt it certainly superseded the 2007's I had at the same age, and in general ... delivered balanced structure to fruit, exquisite freshness and the even ripening provided both the requisite phenolics, gorgeous aromatics and excellent depth of color.

That being said those who chose to declare 2016, did so having had the luxury of evaluating 2016 side-by-side with their 2015's before a final decision was made. But without the likes of Sogrape, The Fladgate Partnership, Sogevinus and the Symington Family Estates also declaring, those producers that did launch their top 2015 Vintage Ports, and the vast majority of Single Quinta releases too, would not be able to fetch top dollar for their Ports, in comparison to what they would have been able to garner had 2015 been a full on "general declaration". That debate will linger on for years to come and it will be fun to look back in the future at the 15/16 siblings.



Nonetheless, there are benefits to years like 2015 and in the mold crafted by Bordeaux and Burgundy, consumers can buy in to an extraordinarily even year with high quality Ports, even if mostly Single Quinta Vintage Ports were actually declared. There was certainly a visceral feeling by those who spoke in hushed tones believing their 2015 VP(s) were better, and the superior year when compared to 2016. That belief made up about 50% of the dozens of well-recognized folks that I have spoken with in 2017 and 2018, to gauge their true beliefs. However, only time will tell which is the better vintage and we've seen that dynamic play out in the past as well, with back-to-back years like 1991 and 1992, as just one of the more recent examples.

Before I focus solely on 2016, there is one last poignant point which I'd be remiss not to mention. Regardless of my feelings about 2015 vs. 2016, I think it is very important to point out, given the high quality of Vintage Ports produced in 2015, their initial financial hit; ultimately, creates a significant buying opportunity for consumers. While some VP buyers prefer to invest solely in the generally declared years, as they feel these vintages are "better" from an investment and cellaring standpoint; as an advocate for the consumer ... my thought is to buy some of both. And by saying this, I see the 2015's as a heck of a bargain and excellent for drinking now or anytime in the next few decades. If you don't like to drink young Ports, save your money. While the 2016 pricing is hard to compare, the quality is for you to decide. My opinions will be transparent, when you read the tasting notes below and those in the next newsletter, since I've already failed to make a dent in what people buy of the 2016 VP's due to their very small production runs.

Generalizing here, the Single Quinta Vintage Ports of 2015 offer extraordinary value for money today and you will be able to drink these early and often, and at the same time, these can and will cellar beautifully for 3 decades as a fair generalization. Take the hint and don't leave them on the shelves. The price is right and it may be quite a while before you find such excellent VP's at these type of prices.

Now to provide an unbiased look at 2016 and detail why they are worth loading up the cellar if you can still find the ones you want to buy. Let me get right to the salient points. Having been very fortunate to taste more 2015 and 2016 than most individuals, here is my takeaway, while still comparing the two. 2015 was a really fine year with a very solid, but **narrow** bandwidth of quality. No matter how that reads, I believe that there were **extremely few disappointments but equally few VP's that were in the upper-echelon of what newborn Vintage Ports can achieve. Almost any of them would be fine to drink on a Friday night, but only a handful or so, can compare with some of the very top 2016's!**



For my palate, 2015 was unquestionably a more **consistent** vintage overall than 2016, ergo my point of a narrower bandwidth. Nonetheless, 2016 had *more* Vintage Ports that reached *significantly* higher heights than 2015's did, but conversely delivered some bottlings which were not all that impressive, (a few with green notes and unevenness in the overall balance), which I did not detect with 2015's. No surprise given the problems in the vineyards early on in 2016 and even during the peak of summer and again in the middle of the 2016 harvest, too. But similar to how I feel about Burgundy, I'd rather take a chance of finding true greatness, by knowingly having to taste through some bottles of mediocrity. However, in the *across the board* view of these two vintages, the middle-of-the-pack in 2016 was slightly better than 2015, but some of its outliers brought the average down a bit.

Another feature of the two vintages which highlighted their difference, generalizing only slightly here; I felt the 2015's had gentler and more rounded tannins overall, but possibly greater acidity and freshness too. This will not inhibit these Ports from aging well, as tannins were omnipresent, but they are just a wee bit more feminine than their peers from 2016, by comparison. Whereas my take on the more than sixty 2016's evaluated, as a group, exhibited bolder more powerful and in-your-face structure which was apparent on the end of the first sip, and some directly on the attack. Some seek out structure for their stylistic preference and other wine enthusiasts look for elegance. These two characteristics are not mutually exclusive, but in a nutshell, describe the main difference in these two fine years.



While 2015 Vintage Ports were pretty darn inky with a few just pure purplish-black, another slight advantage of the 2016's is that on average, they exhibited more extraction and had that blackstrap impenetrable coloration, but not by much! I pay close attention to this detail when visiting 20+ properties in the middle and latter parts of harvest every year, (since 2005) paying close attention to what's in the lagares during harvest and then two years later in June, when I do slow, deliberate and thorough blind evaluations of each and every Vintage Port I taste.

While I find lots to love about 2015's, it was strikingly obvious to me, with very few exceptions, that the Top 10 2015's will likely not cellar quite as long as the finest Vintage Ports from 2016. Although, I also believe that along the path to maturity, the 2015's as a group, may be slightly more ready and enjoyable to consume early on, and may avoid hibernation compared to 2016's which seem like they will be more prone to shut down or enter a dumb phase.

But a quick look at the growing seasons, the 2015 was far more evenhanded. There was no stoppage for a week or more during the height of harvest as happened with 2016. In fact, while it did warm up nicely and evenly after that deluge, which allowed for excellent long hang times; no one can claim that the requisite wind picked up enough to fully dry out the clusters of '16's.

While in the Douro late in the harvest of 2016, we saw the inner grape clusters, with rot, being sorted off the triage tables. A very rainy and cold “spring” challenged the most adept viticultural teams and required a minimum of five or more sulfur treatments in the vast majority of the Douro with few exceptions ... some ... in the Douro Superior. So while 2016 turned out to be a low yielding vintage, given how much fruit had to be dropped to retain grapes with excellent concentration, from start to finish, it was not anywhere near as easy as was 2015. That said, what matters is what you taste in the bottle, all the rest is just a story, a weather report!

While comparisons will go on for decades with these two fine and singular vintages, as they have with the consecutive pairings, (“split vintages”) of 1991/1992, and to a lesser degree with 1982/1983, 1947/1948 and even 1934/1935 ... 2015 and 2016 are not true split vintages, as most Port shippers have come to accept back-to-back years in recent times. At least what used to be the more traditional Single Quinta producers and there are still a great number of them.

In 2019 we shall learn the fate of *traditional* or better said, “Classic” declarations that most speak of in terms of “general declarations. For the fate of the highly touted VP’s of 2017 are just a few months away. Should The Fladgate Partnership, as an example, take the lead on that famous day in April and declare 2017, that would be a game changer for the entire Port trade!



Here are the 2016 Vintage Ports we were able to taste inside the event room. I am sorry about missing a few that were only served in the ante-room, but I have great notes on the 62 unique bottles I spent the majority of the month of June with. That report is going to have many more details and a lot more tasting notes and I wish I had been able to have that in print months ago. It shall be quite interesting to see how my blind TN's compare to this earlier snap-shot report!!

Drinking windows will be provided in my upcoming article with more than 60 2016 Vintage Ports included

2016 Cockburn's Vintage Port – A fine offering by this venerable Vintage Port shipper, with a blend of Touriga Nacional, Touriga Franca, Sousão and Alicante Bouschet. A spicy aromatic complexion offering a bouquet of fresh flowers, ginger, clove and wisps of minerality. It presents a medium-full body weight, sublimely rich and chewy, yet soft and smooth texturally. This Cockburn's VP is very well-balanced, is in possession of solid acidity and tannins that arrive late on the scene. Bold, concentrated tart red fruit flavors deliver solid cellaring potential for decades to come. A really harmonious and beautiful Port. **93+ points 5/10/18**

2016 Croft Vintage Port – There's a pungent tanky essence initially, followed by an intriguing smoky, tar character, with ripe black fruits and a hint of herbs. Weighty across the palate, the soft tannins and structure add a touch of elegance rather than raw power, with medium sweet fig and plum flavors and medium length. The jury is still deliberating on this one and more time to properly evaluate this Croft is certainly needed. **91+ points 5/10/18**

2016 Dow's Vintage Port – A few minutes with this VP is not enough to fully comprehend the underlying nature of this Port and I look forward to spending more time with it in the very near future, blind. For a few brief whiffs and sips, I was immediately enamored, or to be more accurate: blown away! The absolute density of extract here was far closer to black than dark purple, with full opacity. From the grapes of Bomfim & Qta. da Senhora, this baby is medium-full weight, proffering brash blackcurrant and cassis flavors. There is a soft mercurial underbelly to this Port, yet it remains dense, intense and massively concentrated due to the gorgeous Touriga Franca. Lush and black fruited with a powerful and chiseled spine, the extra-long lingering length and cocoa aftertaste was remarkable. Another in a long line of great Dow's. This is the Port ... that if I was still alive, I'd be drinking to see in the next Millennium and have little doubt it would be extraordinary at that point in time! **97++ points 5/10/18**



2016 Fonseca Vintage Port – What a pretty Port this is! The nose exhibited a mélange of blueberry and black fruit notes along with a whiff of lavender and mint; a sophisticated mix at this early stage. Soft yet omnipresent tannins and ample acidity provide the perfect balance, while the viscous velvety mouthfeel adds an extra element rarely seen in Fonseca, so early on. This is a riper style or seemingly lots of RS in this '16 Fonseca. A few moments later the tannins really begin to show their prominence, while avoiding any sign of astringency. The vast potential of this wine is ridiculous! **96+ points 5/10/18**

2016 Graham's Vintage Port – The Sousão grape provides the extra depth of color for this blend, as well as the zip to the acidity. Potent and poised with fragrant floral notes, anise, spearmint and cocoa scents. It seems drier-in-style than expected, fresh and filled with fig and purity of grape flavors. Medium-weight, finely tuned dusty tannins, and excellent upside for this youngster. 25% of the blend comes from old mixed vines. **95+ points 5/10/18**

2016 Quinta do Noval Vintage Port – 2018 represents Christian Seely's 25th year heading up Noval and its 143 hectares. Boysenberry, black cherry and pine resin are my initial sense when nosing this beauty. Medium-weight but seemingly quite soft and round, This Noval is a very harmonious infant, with excellent black and blue fruits amplified by a super long finish. The richness and mellifluous nature of this Port struck a chord that was very appealing. It's the kind of young VP that would be easy to consume an entire bottle, over the course of an evening! Carlos Agrellos the Technical Director and nephew of Antonio Agrellos, the long-time head winemaker, was present at this tasting event, along with Christian. **96+ points 5/10/18**

2016 Quinta do Noval Nacional Vintage Port – If I heard correctly, the Nacional parcel yielded 200 tons per average hectare, in the 3.6 ungrafted acres(?) of vines. After the Noval, I expected this to be a monstrosity in terms of its impact. Intense scents of wild berries, licorice and blackcurrants. This Nacional delivered deep and bold flavors, concentrated, polished and ripe, along with mild-mannered tannins that only showed their grip after the swallow. This 2016 exemplifies sophistication and elegance, but for now, due to its seamless balance, I preferred the regular Noval slightly more, even though my rating shows just the opposite. That said, the Nacional will be the longer lived of these two bottlings due to the sheer power of the tannins and structure overall, (not label bias); yet only today's teenagers will still be alive by then, to find out. 170 cases were produced (of 750 ml). **97+ points 5/10/18**

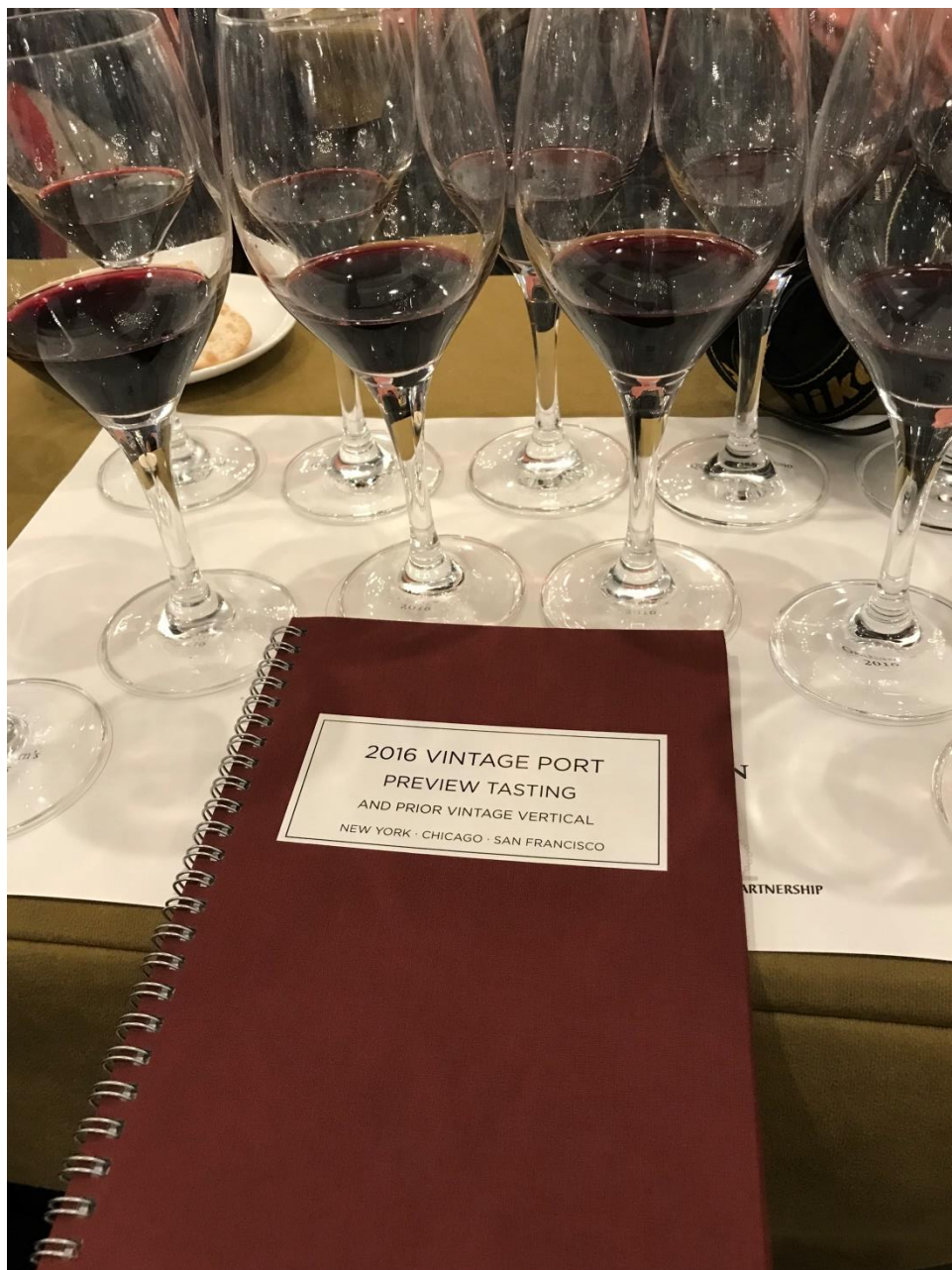
2016 Quinta da Romaneira Vintage Port – After Christian Seely and Antonio Agrellos became involved in 2004, this property's reputation as a great wood-aged Port producer turned around and there was greater balance with bottle-aged Ports and excellent non-fortified wines as well. There are currently thirty-six hectares dedicated to OLD vines of the 86 total hectares. The Vintage Port is 100% foot trodden in the stainless steel (temperature controlled, when needed) lagares that were installed circa 2005/2006. The 2016 Romaneira presents an elaborate fragrance with seductively spicy scents, herbs and fresh floral aromas. It is light to medium-bodied, dark in its purple sheen, ripe and vinous, with modest tannins and a medium-long aftertaste. In less than a month, I will have the opportunity to spend several days with a full bottle of this Romaneira. I also look forward to revisiting for the first time in quite a few years. **92+ points 5/10/18**

2016 Taylor's Vintage Port – Impenetrably opaque like looking into a dark 100' deep wishing well. Aromatically stunning with lavender and plum notes and an assortment of other freshly picked flowers, like what ladies keep in their dresser drawers to make them smell nice. This vibrant young Port has everything: incredibly focused structure, a seductive mouthfeel, a tight-rope walker's deft balance and a depth of flavors that had just a bit more oomph than anything else to this point in the tasting. The tannins may have overwhelmed some palates that are new to early samples of Vintage Port, but I am used to Vargellas' impact on structure, (also Terra Feita and Junco). Power packed and palate crushing here, fortunately there is so much exuberant purple fruit here, the tannins "seem to be" in synch. This is old school Taylor's Vintage Port and reminds me of the 1997 at the very same stage. It is both beast and beauty with a very long and promising future ... that my grandchildren will enjoy some day. But actually, it was a heck of a lot of fun to drink today too. Delicious! **98+ points 5/10/18**

2016 Warre's Vintage Port – It is almost unfair, if not impossible to get a good read on this Port after the Taylor's. But this Warre's was unbelievably extracted and blackish-purple and not the other way around. It offered a profound nose of spicy scents, purity of violets and esteva which added great complexity. Loaded with finesse and black fruits, it is full of fig, kalamata and adds a sense of freshness to its soft but lively character. A great young Warre's, every bit as good as 2011 at this same point in time. 80% of the fruit came from old vines, largely Quinta da Cavadinha, but Telhada also added exquisite Touriga Franca (which was one of the great stories of 2016) and the Touriga Nacional from the same property. **94+ points 5/10/18**



2016 Quinta do Vesuvio Vintage Port – With its 400 hectares situated on the southern bank of the upper Douro, this is one hot and dry property. Initial scents of anise give way to the tell-tale blueberry and violet fragrances. Black plum, fig and grape flavors prevail in Vesuvio's medium-full frame. Velvety tannins, so soft as to almost not register this early in the game, but they're chalky and more noticeable after the swallow. A bit tightly wound at this very early showing, a good long decant will help if you buy this VP early on. A mix of Sousão and Alicante Bouschet make up the miniscule 1,200 cases produced. A consistent provider of great quality grapes, 100% foot trodden ... Vesuvio delivers again! **93+ points 5/10/18**



FEATURE ARTICLE



Roy's 2016 Vintage Port Report

Part 2 of 3

Article and photos by Roy Hersh © March 2019

While my own 2018 story is tired already, this 2016 Vintage Ports are anything but, even if this report won't have much of an effect on the small production of Ports from this impressive vintage, as many of them are sold already. However, just as many individuals will soon gear up to look for the launch of 2017s later this year, the 2016 Vintage Ports can still use another burst of adrenaline from a trusted specialist who has been doing this for a lot of vintages.

In the December newsletter, Part 1 included the preview tasting in California, introducing the 2016 Vintage Ports of Quinta do Noval, Quinta da Romaneira, the entirety of The Fladgate Partnership and majority of the Symington Family Estates portfolio. I see no good reason to come up with an entirely new summary of the growing season, etc., so I may include some repeat items here for those that may have missed the last newsletter or are entirely new subscribers. And there is a third part to this series, to keep the 2016 vintage as fresh as the soon to be declared 2017's will be. What a great time in history to appreciate the greatness of Port wine, as we are seeing three consecutive exquisite harvests for the very first time in more than two centuries. The envelope of tradition is not just being pushed; it is being ripped wide open, in a good way!

The 2016 Vintage Port declaration represents only the 2nd generally declared year of the decade and comes a full five years after the extraordinary 2011's. It has also been a half century since a classic vintage declaration took place with a year ending in "6" – as in 1966. Historically speaking, it should be noted, the 2016 vintage represents only the second time since 1896 that a majority of Port houses released their Vintage Port from a harvest ending with the digit "6".

There will be a part three to this report and it will include my Top 10 as you've grown to expect. It will also include the polished remainder of my 62 tasting notes and of course, it will not count as a separate and distinct newsletter. I've saved some of the best of 2016 for later this coming week. It will be sent directly by email no later than the weekend. And for those that recommended I use a voice activation program, thank you. It was a complete game changer here, although the learning curve for it to become bi-lingual, certainly did present some challenges for the program and for me, in order to be able to use it properly!



METHODOLOGY

My friend Dorota, who at one time worked for Graham's and has joined our Port Harvest Tour, knows a good amount about Port, selects my day's tasting bottles from different shelves to mix up the big names with small and even barely known producers at times. I also have one other person that I trust to handle and set up the bottles in this way. With 2016s, it worked out to be sixteen of them per day for three and sometimes four days, which she then opens, removes the capsules, corks and puts in either a non-branded T-stopper (although some have the names of a Madeira producer, but those are unused) or corks with no names that I bring with me from home. She puts the lineup into my numbered bags and then pours my flight, four glasses at a time, obviously four to get through the lineup. Now you have a clear view of my tasting regime.

Now to provide an unbiased look at 2016 and detail why they are worth loading up the cellar if you can still find the ones you want to buy. Let me get right to the salient points. Whereas my take on the more than sixty 2016's evaluated, as a group, exhibited bolder more powerful and in-your-face structure which was apparent on the end of the first sip, and some directly on the attack. In fact, the tannins were much more prominent than 2015s upon opening and pouring the bottle, than they were on day three. I find that some vintages present just the other way around, the tannins are often times subverted to the fruit initially, and become more powerful the second and third days.

While I find lots to appreciate about the previous vintage, it was strikingly obvious to me, (with very few exceptions) that the Top 10 2015's will most likely not cellar quite as long as the finest Vintage Ports from 2016. To me that is one of the big takeaways in comparing these two back-to-back vintages. I also believe that along the path to maturity, the 2016's as a group are *generally speaking*, quite user friendly early on, as were the 2015s as well. It is not easy to generalize a group of dozens of Vintage Ports from the same year, as the dynamics are so individualized; the 2016s seem much more likely than its younger sibling, to go through a closed phase down the road, on their way to maturity.

It all begins in the Douro Valley vineyards



It shall be quite interesting to see how my blind TN's compare to those from Part 1, an earlier snap-shot report. But I believe as I wrote in the first segment in December, 2016 is a vintage where there are a significant number of rock stars and also a large number of good, but not great Ports, and several poor performances as well. But I will make final judgments in my upcoming part three, which is less than a week away. It will allow FTLOP newsletter readers from just scanning through dozens of scores and instead, likely, or should I say hopefully, reading all of the tasting notes included below.

2016 Alves de Sousa Quinta da Oliveirinha Vintage Port – Such a difference between day one and the second day, where it was less impressive and the third day, it was not as pleasant as day two. One of the few 2016's where I notice that kind of downhill decline from start to finish. The aromatic profile was nothing short of profound with black fruit, cocoa and licorice. By day three it was a bit funky on the nose, and probably just couldn't take that many days with air oxygen in the bottle. Medium weight and seemingly more prominent in terms of its generous and smooth palate impression, with red raspberry and redcurrant dry flavors and a scooch of spirit laced into the mix. The soft, drying tannins and lively acidity provided the balance, but there's nothing here to get excited about, while the finish was of medium length. **89+ points 6/18/18**

2016 Blackett Vintage Port – George Blackett was a Port shipper originally from England in the 1800's who eventually settled in Porto. Mostly known for their wood-aged Ports today, Blackett is doing a fine job of growing one step at a time. I'm not sure if this was just too early to try this Port, but there were some odd nuances on the nose, distinctly iodine, pine, pencil box and walnut shell which concerned me and I kept this four days. Slightly better in the mouth, with blackcurrant and fig flavors, an earthy esteva note and absolutely massive grippy tannins. The balance was just not there, in spite of the fine length of the finish. Must try this again to see if it was the bottle or the Port itself. For now, a generous ... **86 points 6/22/18**

2016 Cockburn's Vintage Port – It was fun spending time with this Port and it was every bit as good as I remembered from the CA tasting the prior month. There was a tanky note upfront, which did not last past day two, bolstered by fragrant fig, expressive lavender and hints of mineral notes, along with a noticeable stewed prune nuance that added some sophistication to the aromatics. Harmonious and juicy while sipping, and quite approachable early on, with cherry pie and brambly blackcurrant flavors. The tannins missed the party, but came knocking later and loud at that. The structure shows this has the ability to reach mid-century with ease. Great aftertaste!

93+ points 6/18/18

2016 Croft Vintage Port – Stylistically, early on, I am rarely a fan of Croft's scent and find some odd and often times unpleasant, distinctive notes. That aside, the palate was far more giving and pleasurable. Medium rich, velvety and vinous in the mouth with ripe plum and boysenberry flavors supported by ample acidity and refined tannins. It began sweet and ended quite a bit dryer stylistically and with a lingering finish. Slightly more than 3000 cases were produced. The 2016 will drink well for a quarter century and as far as thirty five years. **90+ points 6/18/18**

2016 Dow's Vintage Port – This big and deeply extracted and massively concentrated wine, early on, seems to have everything and is right in my sweet spot for Vintage Port. Black plum, fresh-picked carnations and mulberry briar patch, with cocoa and herbal overtones, kick it multi-faceted and fascinating. It remained so, bouquet wise, all three days. Medium-full, velvety elegance and classy to sip on. The tannins began subverted to the fruit and by day three they arrived after swallowing, but were much more refined than Dow's typicity. This could have easily been a Vesuvio, as the fruit showed enough ripeness, that I was thrown off course. Defined by its bold flavors of wild blueberries and plum, this Port is a classic in the making, exuberant and neatly balanced from the first sip to the end of my tasting. While this would be a lot of fun and almost dangerously easy to drink multiple glasses of now, resist temptation and hide it in your cellar. Drink now or through well into the 2nd half of the 21st century. Another in a very long line of incredible Dow's Vintage Ports. **97+ points 6/18/18**

2016 DR Vintage Port – Founded at the turn of the current millennium, DR Port has quickly garnered positive reviews and is widely talked about by Port fanatics. Their Douro property Quinta da Levandeira is on the outskirts of Pinhão, part of the company Agri-Roncão Vinícola, Lda. The founder is Domingos Ribeiro and his daughter Ana also manages the operation of a fine Vinho Verde property, Quinta de Linhares, in Penafiel. DR does a very solid job with still wines, but their rise as a high end boutique producer has come on the back of their exquisite Tawny Ports. This 2016 falls a bit short of their fine effort from 2011, but that was a hard act to follow. This is a far more elegant and refined VP, fragrant and low key. The perfumed just-picked apple and black raspberry scents belied the actual flavor profile, which encompassed spicy boysenberry, licorice and black plum in a lighter sense, more LBV-like than a Vintage frame. The mild tannins and medium long dry finish exhibit mid-term aging potential. **90+ points 6/21/18**



2016 Ferreira Vintage Port – The lifted spicy esteva and pine needle notes were rather prominent on day one (and two), but almost non-existent by day three when they were replaced by black licorice, fresh rose petal and herbs. The palate was gorgeous upon first sip, with a seamlessly smooth mouthfeel, concentrated boysenberry and mulberry flavors, but elegant juicy fruit. Blessed with plenty of zippy acid and the tannins a bit aggressive, as I had to peel my upper lip from my teeth. Yet overall this VP was one of the standouts of my first two rounds. It settled down with more oxygenation by the end of my tasting, but I believe this Ferreira will drink well for nearly 4 decades, and possibly even longer. A fine achievement! **94+ points 6/21/18**

2016 Graham's Vintage Port – As it turned out, this was one of the few Vintage Ports that I felt was the most consistent for the two tastings about a month apart. Pretty perfume and swirling nuances met the nose and kept it firmly planted in the glass with a panoply of black plum and raspberry, lilac, distinctive minerality and cocoa. Loved it! Medium weight and seductively velvety texturally speaking, with ripe flavors on the sweeter side of the spectrum, warm plum compote and pomegranate. The tannins grew more prevalent each day, but remained nicely integrated and only the spirit separated this from an even higher score. While the mid-palate depth needs more time to develop, the finish was juicy and lingering with a yummy plummy aftertaste. This young 2016 Graham's will improve and drink beautifully for at least four decades. **95+ points 6/18/18**

2016 Kopke Vintage Port – The nose of this wine presented some green notes of pine and rock rose initially, but there was a unique Dr. Pepper essence that was also noticeable along with jasmine and floral notes. It was quite exotic actually. Fine-tuned acidity supported the ripe boysenberry and sweet cassis flavors and the medium-full weight of this Kopke delivered a gorgeous texture that led to modestly refined tannins and a medium long finish. Overall, a solid 2016 that will be a nice medium range Port, both approachable early, on with three decades of potential pleasure ahead. What struck me most about this Port was its seamless overall balance, ease of drinking and poise. **91+ points 6/18/18**

2016 Magalhães Vintage Port – From the folks at Quinta do Silval that I first visited 13 or 14 years ago when Carlos Magalhães was making all the Ports. His 2000 Vintage Port was memorable and showed great promise. His two sons are now running the business and I need to get back and see what is new, although I have met with them in recent years to taste some wine and Ports. Speaking of which, this is the latest Vintage Port from this family-run property. It begins with a very floral bouquet, dried plum and it's seasoned with quince and kalamata notes. A heavyweight in the mouth saturated with glycerin, it leaves a viscous impression in its wake. Fleshy, grapy and initially a candied violet flavor persists, but by the third day it had morphed and was showing more raspberry and plum fruit with just a late hint of violet. Balanced, concentrated and with brash tannins loaded for bear. Give this VP time to flesh out, and it will; likely for at least thirty years, possibly more. Nice!! **93+ points 6/22/18**

2016 Offley Vintage Port – As Sogrape's Offley has changed its grape sourcing, typically from Quinta Boa Vista in the past, its new source from the Torto Valley is Quinta do Sairrão, with some grapes still coming from the old Quinta do Porto, outside of Pinhão, (which Ferreira used in the older version of their 10 Year Old Tawny). The 2016 blend consists of 45% each of Touriga Nacional and Franca plus 10% Tinta Roriz. There's intensity to this wine that begins with the aromatics and doesn't stop there, actually it doesn't quit at all. Cultured and classy notes of blueberry, anise, cocoa and cassis strike the nose early and often. But it is on the palate where this particular Port excels. By the second day, this was a full on heavyweight contender that punched way above its weight class. Flavors of black cherry and blueberry are pure and delineated, with a touch of mocha and spice to round out the profile. The most noticeable difference with many of the other Ports and actually other Offley Vintage Ports from this century is the tannic nature here, with blackstrap backbone reminding one of young VP's from 1997 and 2003, which were beasts at this age. This is clearly one of the most classic Offley's I've met at this developmental stage. Luis Sottomayor has clearly delivered a knockout yet again! **94+ points 6/21/18**

2016 Poças Junior Vintage Port – In the early sessions of tasting Port #8, the nose stood out simply as being unpleasant. No reason to list what I wrote down, *unpleasant* does it justice. I held this VP back an extra day (day 4). While aromatically improved, the nose remained, “funky”. However, it was considerably less so than day 1 or 2. The flavors and presence of this Port were far more typical of what I expect from a highly touted vintage like 2016. Medium-full, silky and rich with tart cassis, blackberry and tar notes. There’s density across the palate and it exudes freshness with a warm, lingering aftertaste and enough tannins present to keep this alive at least three decades. **92+ points 6/21/18**

2016 Porto Valriz Vintage Port – Scintillating telltale scents of Valriz’s vibrant violet, red plum, herbs and cocoa powder provide a lifted and exotic essence. Medium-full from day one, this 2016 VP from a little known producer, is surprisingly good. Smooth and seductive, with black cherry, violet candies and a ton of acidity to cut through some of the sweetness and ripe, dusty tannins which are mostly resolved, but omnipresent today. Balanced between the structural components and bright black fruit flavors, this became increasingly enchanting throughout the three days it was evaluated, with consistent scores throughout. As good as this is, the lingering finish may just be its most significant strength. This will drink well early & often and for another 20-30 years. **92+ points 6/21/18**

2016 Quinta Vale d. Maria ~ Vintage Port – A tanky nose emerged initially, with black fruits, black licorice and esteva, this was a cask sample. Dry and brooding, with gobs of acid and tannins that are ripe and attack late. There’s solid black and purple fruit notes and plenty of structure here, but they have yet to meld. The early, tart black fruit impression improved two days later. Approachable, angular and slightly out of synch at the moment, this will require a dozen years to be far more enjoyable. But give it time as this should come around; already exhibiting promise, good structural components and fine length. It will drink well around 2028 and at its best 2033-2045. A departure in style for this producer’s Vintage Port; QVdM is much better known for its excellent DOC wines. Nonetheless, I enjoyed this Port from the Torto Valley. **90-92+ points 6/21/18**

2016 Quinta do Noval Vintage Port – Exquisite bouquet with waves of ripe pear, black licorice, and a scooch of spicy pine that flits in and out of one's perception. Gorgeous silk seduces the tongue, in a medium-full frame with the complexity here ratcheted up every day this remained open. I noted that I thought this was Vesuvio. Wrong! The structure is near-perfect, allowing the dry blueberry, pomegranate and tart rhubarb flavors to stay lively and the tannins are late comers to the party, dusty and chiseled, leading to a splendidly long crescendo at the end. Drink now or through 2060.
96+ points 6/21/18

2016 Quinta de Roriz Vintage Port – Here is why I avoid label bias and taste blind twice per day over at least three days. If you had told me that this Port would score so highly, I would have bet against it. So, there it is, sixteen wines in my first flight and Roriz came in 2nd of all and it was first after day one! Unreal, given some of the much bigger names that emerged. Fragrant, fresh floral intensity, spicy and rose petal perfume. "Wow". Very close to full-weight on day one and it got there afterwards. Mouthfilling and fluid, chewy and concentrated, with lively focused acidity and big grippy tannins that arrived upon the swallow. Ripe, sweet fig and plum flavors are distinct and layered. Big and harmonious from the first sip and that long fruit-filled finish was exemplary. I don't know the price, but when some big name VP's disappear globally, seek out 2016 Quinta de Roriz! Not only is it well made, approachable, but the overall balance and 4 decades of age worthiness make this one of the "sleepers" of the vintage.
95+ points 6/21/18

2016 Quinta de Valle Longo Vintage Port – In the early going there was an odd odor of mercaptans and VA but by day four, while still a bit stinky, there were notes of black cherry and an earthiness. Medium in body with fairly tame chalky tannins and enough acidity to keep the ripe black plum pie and chewy dark cherry flavors tasting fresh, yet it was still difficult to ignore the nose of this Port. The medium length was too spirity, offering bittersweet kalamata and plum nuances. I'm unsure where this is going.
83 points 6/22/18

~ **2016 ~ Quinta do Vesuvio Capela ~ Vintage Port** – Inky black and fully opaque, this is a young monster of a Port. Raspberry and kirsch aromas with a back drop of sweet milk chocolate. Smooth and rich, a pleasure to roll around in mouth, there was a dry black fruit element with a less forward sweet red fruit component as well. The tannins gripped the inside of my mouth and proved the age-worthiness of this Capela. A persistent and lingering silky finish with compelling layers of grenadine and chocolate syrup. This was sensational! Drink at any time during the next three to four decades. ~ **94+ points ~ 6/21/18**

2016 Quinta do Vesuvio Vintage Port – My guess was Dow's, wrong again, but that tells me I liked it a lot. Early essence of earthy, briary black raspberry, with peppery and anise spiciness as it continued to open up. Impressively weighty day one and it stayed that way, but what emerged was a decadent elegant presence in the mouth with a lacy texture and medium-dry, distinctive blueberry and raspberry flavors. Due to big teeth-coating, chiseled and non-aggressive tannins, this reminds me of the juicy-fruited 1997. Absolutely delicious and easy to drink early and often. A long forty year upside for this Vesuvio, but there's no reason to wait; this is going to drink well its entire life. **95+ points** now, but I can see this at 96 in a couple of years. **6/18/18**

2016 Rozès Quinta do Pego Vintage Port – Well, well, well, this is one of the reasons it's crucially important to blind taste and do so, over several days. This VP just kept improving day-by-day. Intense and fragrant fig, creosote, kalamata and dried rose petal had me nosing the glass for minutes at a time. Medium weight and absolutely mink fur soft and smooth in the mouth, loaded with grenadine syrup, ripe black cherry and a mélange of purple and black sweet and ripe wild berries. Structurally, the acidity was focused and kept things fresh; tannins were chalky but refined, yet were omnipresent throughout. The balance was spot on and the finish, multi-faceted and memorably long. A nice surprise, when I learned which VP this was! **94+ points 6/18/18**

2016 Sandeman Vintage Port – The 2007 and 2011 Sandeman VP's are tough acts to follow with their powerful structures and brilliant fruit. Nonetheless, the 2016 version with its dominance of the Touriga Franca grape, offers a lot to like! The aromatics were elevated and fresh, plum dominant, but floral and hints of mocha too. Seductive dry cassis and blueberry fruit overlay the tart plum purity, with enough chalky and late arriving tannins to keep Sandeman's 2016 in the cellar for a dozen years before beginning more serious consumption. While harmonious and fun to drink this early on, this find Sandeman should be best from 2030-2044. **94+ points 6/21/18**



2016 S. Leonardo Vintage Port – Miguel Braga's latest and greatest Vintage Port from Quinta do Mourão. It smells like liquid tootsie roll with white flowers, ripe pineapple and an herbal overtone that's as complex as it is crazy. Yes you read that right, pineapple ... in a Vintage Port. This was one of the more unique and exotic aromatic profiles I've encountered in any of the 2016's. Medium-full weight, viscous and mouth-coating, it was consistent from start to finish; with a sublime structure, bright black and blue brambly berry fruit flavors. The aftertaste is persistent and filled with that tootsie roll signature at the end. Unquestionably this has the stuffing and harmonious flavors to continue to improve for decades, like four or five of them. This is the finest Vintage Port, Braga has ever made. Quite the achievement! **94+ points 6/21/18**

2016 Smith Woodhouse Vintage Port – Madalena's old vine fruit hit my sweet spot with the 2016, and it began with a bright and beautiful essence of lavender, hint of fennel and briary blueberry. Medium-bodied, viscous and silk, it seems like the tannins are soft and possibly subverted to the fruit on first glance, as was the case with SW 1994 at a similar point. Massively fruited with Damson plum and brambly blueberry with each day the tannins gained grip and more power. This 2016 was compelling, I'll admit to being surprised when it was revealed. Like 2011, the Touriga Franca seemed to excel and that just may be the driving force here. No reason that it can't drink well for four or more decades. It's likely my favorite young Smith Woodhouse Vintage Port this side of Y2K. It is a seriously impressive, "Classic Vintage Port." **95+ points 6/21/18**

2016 Vista Alegre Vintage Port – A fine blend of Tinta Roriz, Tinta Amarela, Tinto Cão, Touriga Nacional, Sousão, Touriga Franca, and Tinta Barroca were utilized by Port makers Manuel Tavares and José Araújo. Initial tanky notes with some pine resin, meaty and ripe black berry scents. This Vista Alegre was medium-full weight and soft in the mouth, slightly sharp acid but not volatile acidity and mild-mannered tannins. It is smooth and inviting, generously fruited with cassis and blackcurrant in a dry style. While the finish ends a bit too abruptly with minty characteristics, this 2016 lacks oomph. **86 points 6/21/18**

FEATURE ARTICLE

Roy's 2016 Vintage Port Report

Part 3 of 3



Article and photos by Roy Hersh © April 2019

As you likely have already perused the prior two segments on 2016 Vintage Ports, I will get right down to the final 38 (of 62) tasting notes here. Afterwards, there is a brief summary followed by my **TOP 10**, an item that has accompanied many of my major vintage evaluations back into the 1990's. It is included for the benefit of some readers that may inevitably choose to skip the tasting notes and go right for the best scoring VP's. Without further ado:

Tasting Note Section (listed alphabetically):

2016 Alves de Sousa Quinta da Gaivosa Vintage Port – After several monumental Vintage Ports in the recent past, the 2016 Alves de Sousa, was not as brilliant for this producer. Good, but not great. In possession of spicy rock rose fragrance, with brambly black cherry and gentle hints of fresh flowers. Round and fluid with a light to medium-weight palate impression, and berry blast of dense blackberry and blackcurrant, with a bit too much spirt poking through, but by day three it had mostly integrated. This 2016 proffered round and refined dusty tannins, and hint of spirit leading up to the simple and protracted finish. Drink from 2022 through 2045. **90+ points 6/18/18**

2016 Andresen Vintage Port – This excellent and lesser-known family-owned Port Shipper has been around since 1845. Best known for their wood-aged Colheita Ports, they keep an amazing array of both Aged White and older single harvest vintage dated tawnies in their cellar, and several other categories of Port too. While not necessarily known for their Vintage Ports, oenologist *Alvaro van Zeller* is doing a masterful job of changing that old perception and has crafted a string of excellent VP's in recent years, (2011 is a great example!). This 2016 is no exception. The first enticing aroma to reach my nose was pure Welch's Concord grape juice, along with airy botanical notes, spicy cinnamon, anise and nutmeg. It possessed a medium-full frame, mouth-filling richness, and soft and sweet expressive purple flavors of fig and plum, with extra style points for the bold and imposing iron-clad tannins and cleansing acidity, together creating harmony and balance. Sophisticated in the mid-palate and delivering a profuse and lingering aftertaste with a touch of mocha and mint to add luxurious layers at the end. Andresen delivers another glamorous Vintage Port with this 2016, and it will appeal to Port lovers early on and captivate VP aficionados after 2024 and beyond 2045. **93+ points 6/25/18**

2016 Barão de Vilar Vintage Port – One of the newer Port firms, Vilar was founded in January of 1996, originally from stocks bought by Fernando van Zeller who turned the company over to both of his sons; Fernando, who is CEO and his brother, winemaker Álvaro van Zeller. A solid effort by the van Zeller's who have been working hard to manage several brands under the same roof; this 2016 is very solid and graceful. Lovely lush fragrances of plum, black cherry, spicy menthol and fennel are pure and pleasing. Medium-bodied, soft and delicate texturally, with flavors of fresh fig, redcurrant and herbs, there's a bit too much spirit poking through its heart. Will that dissipate with more time? I'm not sure. Otherwise, the balance is spot on and this really is a delicious youngster that just needs time to come together and fill out the mid-palate and lose the aguardente note, but the promise is definitely there. Drink from 2025-2048. **92+ points 6/28/18**

2016 Barros Vintage Port – I am not sure I've ever opened a tasting note for a young Vintage Port with "grilled meat" as a descriptor, but that was the first thing I nosed in the glass. Kind of like hot dogs on the BBQ. No joke! Additionally, fresh floral fragrance, plum, cherry and spearmint. Medium-full at first, this actually went on a diet and finished off as medium-bodied, refined and symmetrical in terms of density and structure not interfering with the boisterous fruit. Vinous and juicy and less tannic by day 3, the red and black wild berry and licorice flavors were spicy and pure, finishing long and smooth. This Barros Port is tasty, soft and elegant mid-term ager that will be best from 16-25 years from bottling. **89+ points 6/25/18**

2016 Bulas Vintage Port – Bulas offers a nice selection of Douro still wines and has stocks of excellent tawnies (20 year old is blow away great!) and their first VP was the 2009. Their export manager, *Isabel Vieira* is charming and has learned a lot about Port wine, and has expanded the company's influence and refining the overall image, while artistically gifted *Joana Duarte* continues to hone her winemaking skills. Loved the nose, even though straight forward, it is loaded with pure essence of grape, and raspberry preserves. Medium-bodied, this Port is brash and brambly, beginning with sweet boysenberry and blueberry nuanced flavors that team up to deliver a much drier mid-palate and finish of long and layered length. The bold granular tannins are refined and prominent. Hold onto your Bulas for at least 12 years while it improves; but even better after 2035. This 2016 is one of the best Bulas Vintage Ports I have experienced. **93+ points 6/28/18**

2016 Burmester Vintage Port – This is an esteemed old Port Shipper and one of the few that is equally respected for their Vintage Ports and wood-aged Colheitas, and not just in the last decade (or two), but throughout the 20th century, this dynamic played out often. There are others, but if you really sit back and consider this, not many have done both well, for more than a half century! Burmester's 2016 was crafted by Carlos Alves, who produced four Vintage Ports for the company from '16 harvest. The bouquet of this Port was tight as a snare drum early on, solely eliciting scents that were tanky and a bit spirity. Day 2 was better and on day 3, the aromas emerged big time with blackberry and raspberry fruit, accompanied by overtones of esteva and labdanum. The Burmester presents a medium-bodied chassis, fleshy and juicy at the same time, with ripe raspberry and plum flavors that start out simple and sweet and get to dry, rather quickly. By the end of the third day, this was really well balanced overall, with lively acid and chalky tannins that arrived late on the scene, with a medium long finish that showed some spirit and pine resin. Best consumed from 2025-2042. **91+ points 6/25/18**



2016 Cálem Vintage Port – Fresh perfumed bouquet of carnation and lavender notes try to meld with whiffs of aguardente, roasted Brussel sprouts, herbs and esteva. It's all a bit odd and difficult to adequately describe this profile. The palate is a lot more enjoyable though, delivering medium-full weight, rich, soft and fleshy mouthfeel, ample acidity and ripe, refined tannins that provide symmetry. This Cálem exhibits some tart blackberry and pomegranate fruit flavors along with some spicity character that nudges through the mid-section and on to the medium length finish. This Port will provide greater drinking pleasure from 2026 through 2039. **90+ points 6/25/18**

2016 Churchill's Vintage Port – Such a beautiful nose, sophisticated and polished, with ethereal jasmine, mint, esteva and a touch of spirit. Warm and spicity up front, but open a couple more days and that sensation dissipated. A creamy texture and lush mouthfeel morphed into a chunky monkey by the end of my tasting and the massive ripe tannins softened and integrated too. Black raspberry and tart cherry essence were seasoned by a backdrop of minerals, a hint of mint and herbs to complete the stylistically dry flavor profile with a long and seamless fresh finish. Churchill's nailed their 2016 and it will deliver at its best from 2032-2049. **93+ points 6/25/18**

2016 Churchill's Quinta da Gricha Vintage Port – My day one impression left my jaw dropped and over the next two days, this SQVP was a little less enthralling. Gricha is a beautiful property with fifteen manicured hectares of vineyards on this 100 ha estate on the south bank of the Douro. Touriga Nacional is very dominant on the nose of this Port, a note which (in infant Vintage Ports) I describe as "tanky". Additionally, there are scents of black fruits, dried leaves, violet candies, herbs and kalamata. Medium weight, round and ultra-smooth texturally, the tannins were late arriving and grabbed hold of my upper lip like Velcro. Jammy yet bright, the grenadine and boysenberry flavors were bold and ripe. A fine Port that will need time to fully integrate; it is quite good now, but best throughout 2028-2040. **92+ points 6/18/18**

2016 Dalva Vintage Port – Dalva’s Vintage Ports have been on the upswing in recent years. This 2016 offers an evocative and lifted bouquet of herbs, esteva, marionberry, rose petals, tobacco and milk chocolate. The silhouette is as complex as it sounds. It was medium-full by day three, warm, vinous, and dry flavors of blackberry, cassis, a touch of tar and anise. The fruit seemed subverted to the grippy, power packed chalky tannins, but this will take some time to resolve itself. Very tasty nonetheless, and I have seen lots of young Ports of this ilk and it’s an old-school VP that will be better after 2025 and should drink best between 2035 and 2045. I held this back for a fourth day of tasting and it began to show far more finesse and classic character. It’s the best Dalva Vintage Port since the new millennium. **94+ points 6/19/18**

2016 Feuerheerd’s Vintage Port – An accident waiting to happen, and it did. I can’t begin to explain what took place, but I can only describe this as “a chemical spill” with a VA chaser and creosote undertone that followed. Odd ... I hope this was a flawed bottle; nor did it improve, as I held this out for an extra day of evaluation, to be fair. I was not willing to taste it. **Not Rated 6/29/18**



2016 Fonseca Vintage Port – After the early 1980's and beginning with 1985, this shipper has been on an extraordinary run, delivering top notch Ports with every new classic vintage release. 2016 falls right into that mold and with David Guimaraens heading up the Port-making and utilizing the grapes from the trio of distinctive Douro properties, (specifically for Fonseca) they form the backbone for all of Fonseca's venerable Ports. As for 2016, "Paint it Black" is the perfect melodic pairing for this particular Port, as nearly everything about it, screams BLACK. As in blackcurrant, blackberry, black licorice, tar, black olives and a hint of mint. While ultimately approachable, the structure here offers up lively acidity and firm tannins which started out subverted to the fruit, but by day 2, they're far more prominent and by day 3: bigger, more refined, yet omnipresent without seeming too assertive. This is a really beautiful Fonseca, which begins with a ripe, sweet personality, but quickly shows its innate core that points to a rather dark, dry style; a bit reminiscent of some qualities from both 1997 and 2007. This was already a pleasure to taste and the upside is unlimited. Sheer elegance, I look forward to try this again soon. It will be even more approachable after the late 2020's, and should reach its peak somewhere after the midpoint of the century. **96+ points 6/25/18**

2016 Graham's The Stone Terraces Vintage Port – The Stone Terraces has arrived.



While past iterations have been of a high quality, the 2011 comes immediately to mind as I type this; the 2016 version is in a league of its own. Opulent aromas of blueberry, cherry pie, violets and perfumed plum border on flamboyant. Seriously impressive, it exhibits everything I love about a great young Vintage Port and then some. Scintillating aromatics, check. The dichotomy of power and elegance, check; the tannins epitomize the iron fist in a velvet glove. Intensity from the mouthwatering acidity to the captivating flavors of lingonberry, blueberry and purity of grape. Lastly, the complexity in the mid-palate and extraordinarily long finish, check and mate. This will drink at its best after turning 25, and from there add on 30, 40, 50 years, maybe more. A complete Vintage Port, as good as any I've experienced at this young stage of development! **99+ points 6/19/18**

2016 Gran Cruz Vintage Port – The parent company of Gran Cruz is based in France. La Martiniquaise is a huge multi-national drinks conglomerate. They own venerable Port firms, C. da Silva which has Gran Cruz (Porto Cruz) in its portfolio as well as Dalva, the latter of which makes some extraordinary Tawny and Colheita Ports. This 2016 offers a youthful bouquet full of intensity and ratcheted up by stylish scents of huckleberry, forest floor, fresh fennel and mint. Gaining density each day, full, viscous and solidly structured, the *grip the lip* tannins simply *don't let go*; laden with brambly black fruits, dark cherry and licorice flavors which lead to an extravagant aftertaste. At its best the first day of tasting, the structure and fruit seemed more in synch and provided more elegance. Gran Cruz's Port simply needs more time to deliver its full potential, wait until 2026 and drink up by 2045. **92+ points 6/25/18**

2016 Krohn Vintage Port – It is great to see The Fladgate Partnership keeping this revered Port shipper's legacy alive and even continuing production of Krohn's Vintage Ports. TFP took over the company in late June 2013; just after the Carneiro family declared their 2011 Krohn Vintage Port and also their 2011 Quinta do Retiro Novo (SQVP) ... the latter of which I preferred when blind tasting them that June. Anatomy of analysis: 2016 Krohn Vintage Port. It all began with an expansive herbal essence and spicity character, violets, minerals, spicy nutmeg note, licorice, tar and cocoa. It was easy to fall in lust with this seductive and sophisticated silhouette. But there was a lot more to this Krohn than just a pretty nose. In reverse chronology: day 3 saw this VP really hit its stride; the palate presence was that of a heavy-weight, yet in possession of a lightness of being and a suave silkiness across the tongue. Day 2 offered a medium-bodied VP and the tannins emerged and left no question as to their powerful grip; whereas on day one they were soft and elegant. At the finale of the 6 sessions tasting this VP, the tannins were more prominent, yet intricately woven into the tapestry of flavors, seemingly more refined, but in reality, just better cloaked. The fruit buried them, and for the moment, it left its character easier to assess. Flavors of black plum, cassis and grenadine showed more residual sugar on entry, but finished considerably drier, with a scoach of mocha at the end. It was an excellent decision to declare this 2016 Krohn, which I believe will be a better drink at 30 to 40 years of age than it will be at 10-25 years old. **93+ points 6/25/18**



2016 Martha's Wines Vintage Port – This emerging Port company has remained in the shadows for nearly three centuries, as the family-owned operation belonging to the Marta family, has continued to be based in Santa Marta de Penaguião, since 1727. For many years they sold Port in bulk to other shippers, but in more recent times, they've been making their own Port, Moscatel and still wines too, now that the next generation has entered the business and become integral to the success of the company. This young 2016 Vintage Port delivers more wood-aged Port notes on the nose (than Vintage), with baked cinnamon apple, nutmeg, gentle but unmistakable whiffs of volatile acidity and high-toned violet scents. Never would I guess this to be a Vintage Port from the aromatics alone. Light to medium-bodied, elegant and fleshy; it continued to put on weight over the three days it was evaluated. The palate is considerably more interesting and with the typicity one expects of a Vintage Port. This may have just been bottled, (I don't know) but the early tanky impression may be due to that. By the last two days, the red fruits and plum flavors emerged, a touch of lavender and herbs as well. Overall, it was a bit simple, yet tasty and enjoyable; exhibiting mild tannins and ample acidity with a medium length. Drink from 2024 – 2038. **86+ points 6/28/18**

~ **2016 ~ Maynard's ~ Vintage Port** – Founded in 1715, and connected through antecedents to the van Zeller family; this was one of the very early British Port Shippers in days of yore. Maynard's is a brand within Port company Barão de Vilar and it was re-established by the van Zeller family in 1996. The winemaker, Álvaro van Zeller is also co-founder of the company with his (CEO) brother Fernando, and Alvaro is well-known for his oenological prowess at Andresen and other projects. The 2016 VP proffers smoky and floral notes, earthy minerality and the essence of briary blackberry pie. Medium-full and concentrated even on day 1, the full throttled firm tannins and loads of acidity, back up the ravishing flavors of fig and blackcurrant, but remained somewhat four square and lead to a medium-long finish. It will stay approachable early and throughout its lifetime, best between 2041 and 2051. ~ **91+ points ~ 6/28/18**

2016 Maynard's Bio Vintage Port – I wish I knew more about this Port, but all I can share here is that this wine was farmed organically. It had a very intriguing aromatic profile, filled with spicy and smoky character, with boysenberry and redcurrant fruit, a hint of wood char and peppery note and on the second day, fine minerality. Medium-full and velvety mouthfeel, fluid and smooth, with crisp acid and mild, drying, stealth-like tannins that never came out to play during any of my tasting sessions. Flavors of grenadine, pomegranate and plums create a multi-layered, feminine-styled presence, with medium persistence and a long plum infused aftertaste. I would be hard pressed to pick a winner between Maynard's regular VP and this organic effort. The ageability being the major differential and this Bio, likely a shorter prognosis. **91+ points 6/28/18**

2016 Niepoort's Bioma Vintage Port – From the man who loved 2015 far more than 2016, Dirk bottled this to launch in 2019, as he typically does with Bioma, which initially was called Pisca, the name of the vineyard from which the grapes are grown. Dirk has expressed that Bioma typically needs quite a bit of time in bottle to evolve and that's why he always waits until the following spring to finally send these to market. Smart move! There are some intriguing yet odd notes that I picked up from this infant; red berry Kool-Aid, tropical fruit fragrances, and the 2nd day, Bazooka Bubble Gum. Don't shoot the messenger. While the aromatics are clearly not ready for prime time, the palate pleasure was ratcheted up quite a bit and rivaled some of the big names from 2016. Fleshy and concentrated this Bioma managed to provide a lightness and refinement that belied how young it really is.

Blueberry and fig flavors with a touch of mint and minerals, this is an unpolished diamond that has enormous potential, but most would miss it if they tried it at this stage. Prominent but soft tannins are currently subverted to the fruit. I've seen other wines and Ports of his that I didn't think much of early on, and Dirk would school me on what I was not capturing. The 2005 Vintage Port was like this, at the same stage. 10 years later, I tried it again and was flabbergasted how it had put on loads of weight and was a gorgeous and fresh VP with beautiful cleansing acidity. This Port seems to be cut from the same cloth. I'd wait a dozen years to consider drinking this Bioma and likely I'd cellar them for 2-3 decades before breaking into a solid case. It will be stunning by mid-century. That said, having tasted the 2015 on several occasions, Mr. Niepoort chose wisely. **94+ points 6/25/18**

2016 Palmer Vintage Port – An old Port shipper that was founded by Samuel Palmer and when he bought Casa de Melladas in 1685, soon after he was an early shipper of his Ports to England. Centuries later, this company was sold to Amorim in recent years and it is owned nowadays by the (you guessed it!) Brothers Van Zeller, (Fernando & Alvaro). Believe it or not, the aforementioned Samuel Palmer IS somehow related to the Van Zeller brothers. And I thought the six degrees of separation started and ended with their cousin Cristiano van Zeller. But onto the 2016 Palmer Vintage Port, which presents an exotic bouquet beginning with lifted floral notes of violet and carnations and then came the blueberry and blackberry fruit and an herbal note as the very end. Excellent aromatics and fun to nose the glass with these swirling ethereal scents! Medium-full and even heavier day 2 and 3, it seductively wraps its smoothness around the tongue; soft and juicy with some sharp acidity, (in a good way) that meets up with ultra-drying tannins which are ripe and cheek grabbing. The caressing fruit was in the realm of rhubarb and redcurrant, but elegant and with a persistence which was notable. 2016 Palmer will drink even better after 12-15 years of age and be best from 2030-2045. I look forward to check up on this Palmer and see if it improves much in bottle! **88+ points 6/28/18**

2016 Pintas Vintage Port – Brought to you by the couple at Wine & Soul; Jorge Borges and Sandra Tavares da Silva, from an old-vine field-blend vineyard planted in the 1930's. Early on there is a whiff of aguardente that pokes through, (but is barely noticeable by day 3) and it is enveloped by lifted notes of herbs, labdanum, spearmint and wintergreen, followed by red wild berries and a trace of tarry fresh asphalt. Unique to say the least! Refined and opulent in the mouth, deeply concentrated and multifaceted, this Pintas contains palate crushing waves of delicious blueberry syrup, black mission fig and minty flavors. It delivers intensity, complexity and is focused by lively acidity, then reinforced by powerful ripe yet non-aggressive tannins. It is

easily the best Pintas Port in my experience, which goes back to the inaugural 2003 vintage, at this same stage of infancy. When the aguardente fully integrates, my score will go up from here. The capacity for sheer drinking pleasure will be best from 2030-2050+. 3,000 bottles produced. **94+ points 6/25/18**

2016 Porto Menéres Vintage Port – Part of the Fernando and Alvaro van Zeller stable of Ports and from what I understand, the high end of the family-owned and operated grouping of four Port companies they control. An initial strange whiff of ammonia, which very fortunately disappeared an hour and a half later; the rest of the bouquet included fig, grenadine and wintergreen, which were pleasant and welcomed. Medium weight, vinous and soft, with just enough acidity to maintain balance, while the tannins were chiseled and grippy without a semblance of being overly aggressive. The flavors here were poised and pure with a nice melding of fig and plum fruit, along with a dose of spice and anise. The finish was of medium length, but it was apparent that this Port needs a lot more time and should improve nicely with bottle age. The best years to drink this will be 2032-2046. **88+ points 6/28/18**

2016 Quevedo Vintage Port – 2016 represents a quarter century since this family run operation produced its first Port, (1991). This well-made wine delivers spicy scents of black licorice, tar, earthy kalamata along with blueberry and fresh fig notes. Heady perfume! It offers medium-full body weight and is dry stylistically, with blackcurrant and tart rhubarb nuances and powerful dusty tannins that needed more time to fully integrate with the fruit. Layered and beautifully woven in the mid-range, the finish was even drier than the entry and persistent in its length. Loads of upside promise for 3-4 decades; the 2016 exhibits an excellent effort by Claudia Quevedo. By day 3, this had significantly improved and I look forward to taste this again to see if it warrants an additional point. In retrospect, I should've held this back for a 4th day of tasting. **93+ points 6/18/18**



2016 Quinta Dona Matilde Vintage Port – A little known fact is that this quinta had a history before this name was used, as it was formerly known as Quinta do Enxodreiro, one of the ancient properties in the region. This quinta is where Angelo Barros and his family have lived and produced their Ports and still wines. It was sold to Sogevinus in 2006, but subsequently it landed back in the hands of Angelo and his family. There was a pleasant and initial note of kirsch, but the cherry and chocolate seemed to emerge separately during both tastings, day 3. Medium-full early on and it became a heavyweight contender by the end of evaluations. Viscous, round and chewy, with lively acid and dusty refined, but omnipresent tannin. Off-dry black and purple fruit flavors are elegant and complex, and required two swallows and were filled with milk chocolate. This Dona Matilde is striking and is a stylish and classy classic Vintage Port. Wait about a dozen years to open the first bottle of your case and you will be very impressed. The structural support beams of this youngster will allow it to age for up to four decades, with ease.

94+ points 6/28/18

2016 Quinta do Noval Nacional Vintage Port – Given the miniscule yields realized in 2016, production from this legendary parcel equaled a paltry 170 cases or so, which is way down from its average of about 250 cases. Typically I gravitate to the regular bottling of Noval in early blind tasting sessions over the years, I can't remember the last time I preferred the Nacional over the regular bottling, the latter of which is typically bigger, more tannic and less approachable. Just what you'd think was the Nacional, and I have been wrong many times for this reason. The 2016 offered an aromatic profile which was simply opulent, including black cherry, boysenberry, ripe floral fresh notes, tar and figs. Medium weight, soft and elegant with ripe tannins that were focused and refined, while the acidity was rather pronounced and lively. They ultimately combined to create excellent overall balance. This Nacional was all about purity and starting with the prominent fleshy blueberry and grape flavors with a soft and chocolate laden finish on steroids, this Port was so easy to drink, that *approachable* doesn't begin to describe it. The overall balance was marvelous and tannins so beautifully integrated already, that it made this a pleasure to drink. But as Nacional always seduces early on, this is another in a great line of Noval Nationals. I would suggest holding these until they're between 30 and 40 years young, but this will drink well in in the last decade of the 21st century. Yes, I am serious! **98+ points**

6/28/18



2016 Quinta do Passadouro Vintage Port – What a captivating aromatic silhouette, with spicy and striking scents of rose petal, lingonberry, esteva, and a savory note. The palate is every bit as impressive, beautifully balanced by zippy acidity and imposing stealth-like tannins that drop in to the party at the last moment. Medium-full weight, softly textured yet fleshy and lithe in the mouth, the concentration and delicious layers of fruit are sumptuous, with black plum and boysenberry flavors that meld beautifully with the structural components and deliver a silky persistent finish. This is the finest Passadouro Vintage Port I have tasted and it has all of the characteristics for drinking well in its youth, and it should age for at least three or more decades. **93+ points 6/25/18**

2016 Portal's Quinta dos Muros Vintage Port – For such an infant, this Portal SQVP had a strikingly evocative aromatic profile, including fragrant fresh floral notes of lavender, rose petal, and fruit essence of pomegranate, plum and blueberry. Medium-full bodied and luxuriously silky soft in the mouth, this 2016 just kept improving and was held over for a fourth day of tasting. It was dense, chewy and super smooth, with plenty of stuffing throughout its core and finish. The 3rd day, the power emerged and the structure was up to the challenge to remain in synch with the hedonistic and viscous nature of the fig and plum preserves. On the 4th day the overall balance was under the microscope and faired seamlessly well and in complete harmony. The only dynamic that will help further improve this Port, is time, solely to gain further complexity. 2016 Quinta dos Muros will drink well early in life and reward those who have a long life span ahead, as it will easily be a great drink at the mid-point of the century. Wine & Port oenologist Paulo Coutinho has been at Quinta do Portal since the very beginning. This is yet another Vintage Port for him to be proud of, and best in recent memory, at least back to 2003. **94+ points 6/26/18**



2016 Quinta do Portal Vintage Port – Earthy and luxurious scents of portabella, minerals, dried leaves, black pepper and redcurrant. Medium-bodied, round and feminine with silky tannins that become more aggressive right before the swallow. This 2016 VP is a very well-balanced Port, delivering sweet blueberry pie, ripe blackberry and grenadine flavors, with vibrant acidity creating the freshness. The creamy and voluptuous mouthfeel add dimension and depth in the mid-palate and on the prolonged finish. Paulo Coutinho has again created a refined and approachable mid-term ager, reminiscent of the 1999. It'll drink well early on and through 2045. **92+ points 6/25/18**

2016 Quinta da Romaneira Vintage Port – There's great purity in the raspberry jam, fresh strawberry fragrance, dried leaves, rock rose, mocha and pressed dried flowers. The aromatics are the significant strength here. The palate offers medium-weight but started out a lot lighter the first day, with good acidity and tannins that are seemingly resolved ... if even perceptible. They could be subverted to the fruit, but I am usually as good at sleuthing that as I am about perceiving low levels of TCA, but I digress. Lush and dry rhubarb flavors meld with slightly riper plum, but overall deliver a tart impression, exceptionally dry on the medium length finish. The upside here is that this will be a Port to consume early on, as it is quite tasty if you enjoy a drier-style Vintage Port and it will remain fun to drink over the next two and a half decades, while some of your "bigger" 2016's continue in cellar. **90+ points 6/28/18**

2016 Quinta do Tedo Vintage Port – Quinta do Tedo is a very beautiful property with 14 hectares planted, which sits above the confluence of the Tedo and Douro Rivers. Owned by Vincent and Key Steffey Bouchard since 1992. Scents of stewed fruits, poached plums and esteva aromas deliver a unique bouquet. Medium-weight and immediately voluptuous and silky across the palate; pure symmetry. The flavor profile offers strawberry, Concord grape and purple plums that are delicious and kept in check by suave acidity. For now, the tannins seem out of synch, with Velcro-like grip. While I have no doubt that this Tedo can age for a long time, the question remains if the fruit will ever be able to counter the aggressiveness of the tannins. **90+ points 6/28/18**

2016 Quinta do Vallado Adelaide Vintage Port – When one thinks of this particular quinta, what comes immediately to mind, are some of their superbly crafted Douro reds like their Reserva, or the Touriga Nacional and even a separate bottling of Sousão, just a few of the many examples of stellar DOC wine program. Vintage Ports ... not so much; with few exceptions the Ports most people think of when considering Vallado, are wood-aged beauties of which they have quite a few. This 2016 proves that Quinta do Vallado, with winemaker *Francisco Ferreira* and consulting (cousin) oenologist Xito Olazabal, have been creating much better Vintage Ports during the past decade. Fresh and pure notes of blueberry, blackcurrant and herbs had my nose stuck in the glass, taking it all in ... literally for minutes, as the freshness was so alluring. Medium-full bodied, fluid and round, the density and intensity was more dominant the last two days of tasting. Concentrated blackberry and ripe fig flavors are supported by chalky, ripe and provocative tannins and focused acidity, providing balance to Adelaide's core. It has heaps of potential here as this fine 2016 needs more time to evolve. Drink after 2026 and best by 2048. **94+ points 6/28/18**

2016 Quinta de Ventozelo Vintage Port – The aromatic characters may sound odd separately, but the sum total was actually quite unique, with notes of blackcurrant, tootsie roll and sun-dried tomatoes and a touch of tanky nuance. Medium-full bodied, chewy, viscous and bold in the mouth, with overtly drying cheeky tannins and plenty of acid. Flavors of plum, anise and redcurrant fruit embraced the gripping structure and delivered a delicious and long lasting aftertaste. This is a mid-term ager of nearly 30 years. This equates to a very fine achievement by João Roseira. The 2016 is my favorite Ventozelo VP since 1992. **92+ points 6/18/18**

2016 Rozès Quinta do Grifo Vintage Port – Day 1 this was a beast, hitting high marks in all categories. Over the next couple of days it calmed down a bit and showed what it was truly made of. On the nose, vibrant raspberry, sweet boysenberry, black licorice and wisps of wintergreen were both dazzling and refreshing. Both the freshness and intensity remained all three days and the palate was no different. The Grifo showed well throughout, the exuberant fruit was showy and bright with spicy anise, brambly blackcurrant and marionberry flavors bolstered by focused acid and cheek gripping tannins. But it possessed one of the most seductively elegant mouthfeels of any 2016 Port I reviewed. Not only was it a significant strength for this Rozès, but the overall balance and persistence of the finish were excellent too. The Grifo exhibits loads of character and the long-term cellaring potential for up to five decades. I don't take that, or say that lightly. Rozès nailed the 2016 hat trick! **94+ points 6/19/18**

2016 Rozès Vintage Port – One of the most consistent Vintage Ports from day 1 through day 3, of more than five dozen bottlings. That's a mouthful in itself; but the nose here is no slouch either, including scents of strawberry-rhubarb tartlet, briary blackberry and milk chocolate nuances. This VP is medium-bodied, bold and extremely fleshy, round and ultra-smooth, sublimely concentrated and harmonious. The blackstrap tannins are equal to the brilliance and bold flavored blueberry and boysenberry fruit, supported by generous acidity and purity of grape and mocha on the elongated finish. It exhibits superb balance overall and will be cellar-worthy for at least 4 decades. With two excellent Rozès SQVP's already tasted before this Port was revealed, 2016 was undoubtedly a break out year for this venerable Port shipper, as all three of their vintage bottlings performed remarkably well! **96+ points 6/25/18**

2016 Taylor's Vintage Port – Telltale notes of lavender and blackberry are impossible to miss, along with blackcurrant, anise and a scoach of eucalyptus. Medium-full bodied and equally expressive the first and third day it was evaluated, a strong signal. It's mouthfilling and granular; chewy, concentrated and multilayered, a massive young Vintage Port destined for a very long life ahead. Its tannins are brash and grippy, but not overly aggressive, and they seem slightly more prominent upon the swallow. Lush fig, blackberry and licorice are deeply woven into the core of this spicy black beauty and the everlasting aftertaste hangs on for minutes. While fun to sip this early on, my suggestion would be to stash this in the deep recesses of your wine cellar and begin to drink circa the early 2030's and throughout the three decades to follow. Approximately 6,200 cases produced. **98+ points 6/19/18**

2016 Tedo's Savedra Vintage Port – Leading off with a tanky note and plenty of VA, the profile remained high-toned all three days, also with some floral and herbal notes. Light to medium weight, the VA also popped up on the palate, along with mostly red and purple fruits that seemed simple, but marred by the lack of integration to this early point in time. I will reserve further judgement beyond the score and will make sure to try another bottle of this in June 2019. Previously, I have always enjoyed the Savedra bottlings. **84+ points 6/28/18**

2016 Vieira de Sousa's Quinta da Agua Alta Vintage Port – Tightly wound initially, it finally delivered an intensely perfumed and exotic nose of pure raspberry, cassis, charcoal, tar and black licorice. The palate was open for business and possessed sheer elegance on the medium-full bodied frame. The Agua Alta was rich, round and showy all three days; while the tannins kept gaining grip and power the longer this Vintage Port remained open. There is a monster lurking beneath the surface here and it may take a few years for this aspect to fully emerge. Meanwhile, the dense plum, boysenberry and blueberry fruit was on the sweet side of the spectrum, fresh and pure. An expressive SQVP from the Borges family, this 2016 has a lot of upside potential yet to be fully revealed. Drink 2028 -2055. **92+ points 6/25/18**

2016 Vieira de Sousa Vintage Port – A year after graduating oenology and viticulture school at the Instituto Superior de Agrónómica in Lisboa, a woman moved back home to Celeirós in the Douro. One year later, she made her very first Vintage Port, it was a decade ago (this September) when she was 24 years young. Confident yet shy, blessed with talent and in need of experience ... a star was born; *Luisa Borges, winemaker*. With a decade of trial and error, and some great successes, many things have changed, but one dynamic has not. Luisa remains as humble today as she was the first time we ever met. The 2016 Vintage Port shows exactly how much Luisa has grown into her craft. Fragrant fresh roses, notes of ripe boysenberry, cassis and an herbal streak abound in the glass, pure and fresh. Medium-full bodied, soft, feminine and voluptuous velvet across the palate; then the polished drying tannins enter the game and display their strong spine, in a graceful way. Exquisite, delicious and well-defined purity of grape, with juicy ripe blackberry and herbs, there's no shortage of intricacy in the mid-range or finish. It will be fun to see this Port progress over the next couple of decades, and three, likely four more decades in total is pretty much a certainty. Luisa's father António and mother Alice should be extremely proud of their daughter and all that she's achieved in a fairly short period of time! **95+ points 6/25/18**



Carlos Macedo E Cunha ... special thanks!!!!!!!!!!

Without the help of Carlos ...let's just say, that my tasting went well because he has been a great friend and helped me with the storage and delivery of the 2015 & 2016 Vintage Ports.

Roy's Top 10 List of the 2016 Vintage Ports

With 2016 Vintage Ports, I scored ten of sixty two Vintage Ports with a baseline score at 95 points or above. Not all of them are the "usual suspects." Nonetheless, there were more "outstanding" Ports between 92-94 points than in any previous vintage I've rated. The list below represents my 10 Top Vintage Ports of the 2016 vintage, in order of preference from top to bottom and where Ports had the same score, my judgment of how well those wines showed, determined how they were placed in the list. No bias by placing personal favorites above others that I am not typically as fond of. Doing this the right way is the only way. Last but not least, congratulations are in order for Rozès, and Vieira de Sousa, both of which made it into my Top 10 list for the very first time. Rozès in fact, had submitted 3 of their Vintage Ports, (two were SQVPs) and even though they were in different flights, all scored exceptionally well!

ROY'S TOP 10 LIST OF 2016 VINTAGE PORTS		
1st	Graham's Stone Terraces	99+
2nd	Taylor's	98+
3rd	Quinta do Noval Nacional	98+
4th	Dow's	97+
5th	Rozès	96+
6th	Quinta do Noval	96+
7th	Fonseca	96+
8th	Vieira de Sousa	95+
9th	Graham's	95+
10th	Quinta do Vesuvio	95+

Conclusions of 2016 Vintage Ports

While many of the most well-known producers did extremely well in 2016, there were many lesser talked about names that really hit their mark in 2016. I'm not necessarily talking about breaking into my Top 10 list, but focused on ratings of extremely well made wines that will offer some buying opportunities, with ratings between 92-94 points. The pair of Single Quinta Vintage Ports by Rozès and the Rozès itself comes immediately to mind, as did ... other SQVPs that have delivered within a narrow bandwidth over the years and 2016 was a breakout year for them.

Overall, the 2016 vintage scored higher across the board than any prior vintage I have ever assessed. So, I must admit to being wrong when judging by the difficult growing season. I have learned an important lesson from this: NEVER be too quick to judge a vintage solely based on what looks to be an imperfect growing conditions, because what seemingly matters most and can make up for many speed bumps along the way, is the last three or four weeks prior to picking.

Some hallmarks of this vintage:

I kept using the word **intensity** in my tasting notes. And **approachable young. Harmonious balance and symmetry**. And **integrated tannins**. These are standout dynamics for 2016. The production numbers for the 2016 vintage were very low and compared to 2011, about half. That said, prices are considerably higher and I'll just say that 20% is what I've seen to this point. So with the prices considerably higher than they were in 2011, which is a good thing for the future of the Port trade; consumers don't seem to be shying away, with 2017 on the horizon and likely to be declared by the majority of the Port trade, having three consecutive vintages in the marketplace, or whatever is left of them ... will be a new beginning for the way we look at vintage declarations, with all three to choose from. It leaves quality assessments to not only critics, but consumers will have the chance to make up their own minds and taste widely.